

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Jesus, the Firstborn Among Many Brethren

Scripture: Romans 8

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that He might be the first-born among many brethren; (8:29d)

God's supreme purpose for bringing sinners to salvation is to glorify His Son, Jesus Christ, by making Him preeminent in the divine plan of redemption. In the words of this text, it is God's intent for Christ to **be the first-born among many brethren.**

In Jewish culture the term **first-born** always referred to a son, unless a daughter was specifically stated. Because the **first-born** male child in a Jewish family had a privileged status, the term was often used figuratively to represent preeminence. In the present context that is clearly the meaning.

As it is in almost every instance in the New Testament, the term **brethren** is a synonym for believers. God's primary purpose in His plan of redemption was to make His beloved Son **the first-born among many brethren** in the sense of Christ's being uniquely preeminent among the children of God. Those who trust in Him become God's adopted children, and Jesus, the true Son of God, graciously deigns to call them His brothers and sisters in God's divine family (Matt. 12:50; cf. John 15:15). God's purpose is to make us like Christ in order to create a great redeemed and glorified humanity over which He will reign and be forever preeminent.

In his letter to Philippi, Paul beautifully portrays God's purpose of glorifying Christ: "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. 2:9–10). Our ultimate purpose as the redeemed children of God will be to spend eternity worshiping and giving praise to God's beloved **first-born**, our preeminent Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. To the Colossians, Paul further explains that Christ not only is presently the "head of the body, the church," but is also "the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything" (Col. 1:18).

God's original purpose in creation was to make a people in His divine image who would give Him honor and glory by serving and obeying Him in all things. But when Adam and Eve rebelled,

alienating themselves from God and bringing damnation upon themselves and all subsequent humanity, God had to provide a way of bringing fallen mankind back to Himself.

Through Christ, He provided that way by placing the sins of all mankind upon His sinless Son, causing “the iniquity of us all to fall on Him” (Isa. 53:6). Those who trust in that gracious sacrifice on their behalf are saved from their sins and given God’s own glory.

As the redeemed of God, conformed to the image of His Son, we will forever glorify Him with the glory He has given us. Like the twenty-four elders who fell down before Christ on His throne, we will cast our crowns of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8), of life (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10), and of glory (1 Pet. 5:4) at our Savior’s feet, exclaiming, “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created” (Rev. 4:10–11).

We thank the Lord for giving us salvation and the eternal life, peace, and joy that salvation brings. But our greatest thanks should be for the unspeakable privilege we have been given of glorifying Christ throughout all eternity.

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